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# **Soil and Water Conservation** *news*

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## Comments:

### From the SCS Chief

### Conserving Soil: New Tool for Teaching

When this country began, some 90 percent of all Americans lived on farms. Today that percentage has shrunk to less than 3 percent, and a majority of the nonfarm people live in and around cities. The children in many of these families grow up without firsthand experience with growing things; they have only the vaguest notion of how food and fiber are produced.

It is with this fact in mind that the Soil Conservation Service has published *Conserving Soil*, a colorful book of teaching materials for grades 6 through 9. Designed to help make teenagers aware of soil as a fundamental natural resource, the book can be used by teachers of science or social studies. It was written and illustrated by an educational consulting firm with guidance from SCS.

SCS has published enough copies of *Conserving Soil* to reach thousands of teachers, and supplies of the book have been distributed to local SCS offices. We urge all SCS district conservationists to work closely with local conservation district boards and school district leaders in developing the best way to get *Conserving Soil* into the hands of classroom teachers.

I firmly believe that if we can demonstrate to young people today the importance of conserving soil, water, forests, and wildlife, we will have gone a long way toward winning the conservation battle for future generations.



**Cover:** A full-color version of this photo of stripcropping in Carroll County, Md., wraps around the cover of the new SCS conservation education book, *Conserving Soil*. (See Chief's Comments.) (Photo by Tim McCabe, visual information specialist, Public Information, SCS, Washington, D.C.)

John R. Block  
Secretary of Agriculture

Peter C. Myers, Chief  
Soil Conservation Service

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## Protecting Cultural Resources

### SCS Announces New Policy for Protecting Cultural Resources

The Soil Conservation Service published a proposed new policy and procedures for protecting archeological and historic properties in the Federal Register on August 20, 1982. The objectives of the proposed rule are to streamline procedures; minimize burdensome, costly, or time-consuming requirements; and mesh historic preservation considerations with SCS programs. SCS consulted the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), the National Association of Conservation Districts, the Sierra Club, the National Cattlemen's Association, and interested soil and water conservation districts in developing the new policy and procedures.

Public comments on the proposed rule were accepted by SCS until October 19. The final rule will be published after public comments have been considered and the proposal has been reviewed. When the rule is final, it will supersede ACHP regulations for SCS.

### Site Assessment Training Cuts Costs

Over the past 10,000 years or more, large populations lived in villages and towns throughout the Mississippi Valley area. We know of them only through their towering earthen mounds, pottery, stone tools, and other artifacts. Sometimes, important archeological and historic resources are destroyed when they are not discovered until after construction has begun on soil and water conservation projects. In addition, stopping construction until a professional survey can be made is costly and time consuming.

In Arkansas, the Soil Conservation Service is trying to reduce those costs while still protecting important cultural resources. Robert Cantrell, SCS soil conservationist on the water resources staff, arranged for Arkansas State Archeologist Hester Davis to train SCS personnel in identifying where prehistoric and historic sites are most likely to occur. Ten SCS employees and three from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service participated in the 5-day workshop.

Davis spent the first 2 days discussing Federal and State laws for protecting cultural resources and the prehistory of eastern Arkansas, the part of the State where SCS is involved in the most land-disturbing activities. She also defined archeological sites, both prehistoric and historic, and described the artifacts likely to be found at each.

On the third day, the group visited an archeological site at Toltec Mounds State Park, and discussed the soil cores taken from it. The class also had "hands-on" experience in discovering sites and recording their findings. One of the sites they visited was of prehistoric and historic importance, while several others contained only prehistoric material.

Davis stresses that although SCS employees are trained to identify prehistoric and historic sites and collect and record their findings, a professional archeologist must evaluate their significance. Cantrell says that while this is true, SCS people who have the training can save the agen-

cy money by reducing the time an archeologist will have to spend on a project and by reducing the discovery of important sites after construction has begun.

SCS is currently working on a Public Law 566 small watershed project along the Tyronza River in eastern Arkansas. The project area contains many archeological sites and Cantrell says that by assisting with the cultural resources survey itself, SCS will probably save more than \$50,000.

Diane Gelburd,  
national cultural resources specialist,  
Social Sciences, SCS, Washington, D.C.

### Rare Prehistoric Site Discovered in Oregon

The Soil Conservation Service discovered a 10,000-year-old archeological site last year during an environmental assessment for construction of the Pilcher Creek Dam in the Blue Mountains of Oregon. Construction of the dam is part of the Wolf Creek Public Law 566 small watershed project designed to improve the use of existing water supplies.

In 1981, under contract with SCS, Archeologist Ben Francy from Eastern Oregon State College discovered six prehistoric sites and five historic sites at the proposed dam site during a preliminary archeological survey. Francy judged that four of the prehistoric sites were significant enough to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places and recommended that all four be tested further.

Further testing by SCS indicated that one of the sites was deep and contained several levels of cultural resources. SCS then contracted with Archeologist David Brauner of Oregon State University to recover the site.

The first part of the recovery work was completed in July 1982. In a total 10-meter-square area, most of which was dug down to 3 meters, over 4,000 artifacts were found. More than 100 of these are projectile points, scrapers, and other tools of prehistoric people. "Windust" style projectile points recovered at the

# SCS Commends Idaho Field Advisory Committee

site are believed to be 8,000 to 10,000 years old. So far, the site has yielded about 10 times the number of artifacts found at most other early sites.

Aside from its age, upland situation, and good preservation, the site is also significant because of its strategic location between the Columbia Plateau and Great Basin. Different styles of stone tools intermixed at the site enable archeologists to study cultural interchanges among the people who once lived in the two regions.

Depending on the funding available, the recovery effort is planned to continue at the site next summer to sample at least 20 percent of the area before the scheduled completion of Pilcher Creek Dam in late 1983. That is when the approximately 200-acre reservoir area will fill with water and cover all four prehistoric sites. Before the reservoir forms, a layer of gravel will be spread on the sites to protect them from wave action and preserve them for future archeologists to study.

SCS is assisting the Powder Valley Water Control District and the Union Soil and Water Conservation District on the Wolf Creek watershed project.

**Frank Reckendorf,**  
environmental resource specialist, West National  
Technical Center, SCS, Portland, Oreg.

**Clyde Scott,**  
State biologist, SCS, Portland, Oreg.

**Diane Gelburd,**  
national cultural resources specialist,  
Social Sciences, SCS, Washington, D.C.

The Idaho Field Advisory Committee (FAC) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture received a letter of commendation from the Washington Advisory Committee in May and a certificate of merit from the SCS West National Technical Center in June for its management of the State's outstanding river basin study program. Committee members are SCS State Conservationist and FAC Chairman Amos I. Garrison, Jr., in Boise; Harold Stultz of the Economic Research Service in Corvallis, Oreg.; and Richard F. Sanders of the Forest Service in Ogden, Utah. The SCS river basin staff leader is Forrest Closner.

The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 authorizes cooperation between USDA agencies and other Federal and State agencies in river basin planning, surveys, and investigations. SCS is responsible for program leadership for these activities, working closely with the Forest Service and the Economic Research Service. River basin studies support ongoing conservation programs by evaluating ways to reduce soil erosion to maintain agricultural productivity, reduce upstream flood damages, and conserve water through irrigation management.

The Idaho FAC received special recognition for the high quality and applicability of river basin studies and plans produced by the river basin study staff. Their achievements include a plan for restoring an existing dam and distribution channel in the Brundage watershed. If applied, the plan could make the irrigation water delivery system 50 percent more efficient.

A plan developed by the staff for the Twenty-Four Mile Creek irrigation system could improve that system's efficiency by more than 50 percent. As a result of the staff's Bench Ditch study, 4 miles of canal are planned to be replaced by a 2,100-foot-siphon. The new system will save an estimated 180 acre feet of water annually.

The Idaho cooperative river basin study coordinating staff also examined the sedimentation rate at Daniels Reservoir. They calculated that an estimated

30 years of useful life remains before the reservoir's capacity is lost. This loss results from sedimentation coming from upstream dry cropland with annual soil erosion rates of up to 17 tons per acre. A plan drawn up by the staff will reduce soil erosion rates on the dryland cropland to about 3 tons per acre per year and extend the useful life of the reservoir to about 500 years. It will also increase dryland crop production by about 50 percent.

Closner says that the right amount of the right kind of management by the Idaho FAC and the strong working relationship among the river basin study coordinating staff enabled them to achieve what they did. "The FAC gave us enough leeway to do our job right, but stayed close enough to help solve difficult problems," says Closner.

**Nancy M. Garlitz,**  
associate editor, *Soil and Water Conservation  
News*, SCS, Washington, DC.

## Correction

Due to the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1982, there was a change in the 1983 wheat program, as reported in the October 1982 issue of *Soil and Water Conservation News*. On page 3, the last sentence of the sixth paragraph should read, "For producers who did not participate in the 1982 wheat program, their 1983 acreage base will remain the same as the base established for the 1982 wheat crop."



# Management Tips

Readers are invited to submit "Management Tips" to the editor, *Soil and Water Conservation News*, Soil Conservation Service, P.O. Box 2890, Washington, D.C. 20013

## Old Ideas Spark New Interest

"Something old, something new" was the theme of a farm conservation demonstration day attended by about 300 persons April 2, 1982, in Middletown, Md.

The event was held on a 240-acre dairy farm owned by Everett Moser and operated by Randy and Phillip Sowers. When Moser retired several years ago, the farmer he rented to removed his conservation practices. When the young Sowers brothers took over the operation, they were dismayed at the amount of erosion that was occurring.

"The conservation district supervisors heard about it and thought this was a good opportunity to demonstrate our conservation 'product' to area farmers, and at the same time put this farm back on its feet conservation-wise," said Owen Unangst, Soil Conservation Service district conservationist for Frederick County.

The sponsors included the Catoclin, Frederick, and Montgomery Soil Conservation Districts and USDA's Soil Conservation Service, Extension Service, and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. Commercial firms donated equipment, supplies, and food. The Sowers brothers supplied labor and equipment, and neighbors volunteered help.

"Some farmers tell us they can't afford to practice conservation," Unangst said. "The conservation districts set out to show them that they can't afford not to. So in addition to showing off some of the latest technology, we decided to demonstrate some 'old' techniques that farmers can do themselves with their own equipment and at their own pace."

One of the most cost-saving techniques demonstrated was the old "island" method of constructing diversions using plows instead of bulldozers. Volunteers on tractors snaked around hillsides plowing a series of furrows on either side of a 6-foot-wide undisturbed center swath. They threw up mounds of earth and shaped them into small ridges to form diversions, which will safely divert excess surface water runoff to control erosion. The cost of plowing in diversions is about 25 cents per foot compared to \$2 per foot for bulldozing them in, according to Unangst.

Two of the diversions installed during the field day ended in a pasture. The outlets were lined with rock riprap to prevent erosion. The third outletted into a small stream.

A front-end loader smoothed and shaped a cropland gully converting it into a grassed waterway. A new twist to this well-known practice was the use of a

Curlex blanket—aspen excelsior sandwiched between two layers of nylon netting—to hold the seed in place. Several hundred-foot rolls of Curlex were laid down the center of the waterway and anchored with large metal staples. Both the excelsior and netting will decompose in about 9 months, after the grass has taken hold.

In a low, wet corner of the field, machines dug a trench for drainage tile. A nearby spring was tapped and the water fed into a new, freezeproof live-stock watering trough. The Sowers plan to use this once practically useless area as pasture. The trough will provide the cows with a clean, safe water supply. It will also help keep them from polluting a nearby stream and trampling its banks.

Across the road on another hillside, a no-till drill was being used to renovate a sparse hayfield with legumes. Conventional tillage would have subjected the steep hillside to serious erosion. The improved hayland will provide better erosion control and more nutritious feed for the cows.

Visitors also observed an animal waste storage structure which had been in operation for several years. The structure stores waste from 100 cows for up to 90 days. This saves on the time, labor, and fuel required for daily hauling. Field



During a field day at the Sowers brothers farm in Frederick County, Md., volunteers lay down a Curlex blanket, an excelsior mat which protects newly seeded areas from washing away during a rain.

application of the waste can be timed to crop fertilization needs and weather conditions, lessening the chance of runoff and water pollution.

About a mile down the road, contour stripcropping to control erosion was also being demonstrated.

The "old and new" theme carried over to the machinery. In addition to the many pieces of conventional equipment loaned by farmers and dealers, a 1948 diversion plow, renovated by local Future Farmers of America students, was on hand. Attracting as much attention was a Quadtractor, which looks like a dune buggy but works like a tractor. Originally developed to haul logs in the New England woods, it's now being touted as the ideal machinery for small—50 acres or under—farming operations because of its cost and fuel economy.

"Field days are an old idea, but we're working with a new generation of farmers," Unangst said. "It gave us a chance to show a lot of people at once what conservation is and what it can do. This field day was so well received that the conservation districts in Frederick and Montgomery Counties have decided to make it an annual event."

Katherine C. Gugulis,  
public affairs specialist,  
SCS, College Park, Md.

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## **The Match Game: Matching Farmers With Landowners**

"What's the use of retaining farmland if it isn't going to be farmed?" asked Steve Verrill, chairman of the Middlesex Conservation District. Although both the Essex and Middlesex Conservation Districts chose farmland retention as one of their major objectives, this question still bothered the district supervisors.

These two districts, located in northeastern Massachusetts near Boston with 2 million people on 877,000 acres, started looking for ways not only to keep their farmland, but also to keep it in some kind of agricultural use. They came up with the "Match Game," to match farm

owners who did not farm with farmers who needed more land for farming. As a result, the two counties would have more land in agriculture, more local products, and a more viable agricultural industry.

To set up the program, known locally as "The Agricultural Land Clearinghouse Program," the districts first developed a list of interested farmers and landowners. Responding to direct mailings to district cooperators, newspaper and newsletter articles, and discussions with community leaders, many interested people contacted the districts.

The districts then determined the physical characteristics of the land such as location and acreage, any special requirements, whether land was available for rent or lease and for how long, and other information that would be of value to a farmer interested in the land. A similar followup was made with farmers interested in renting land to determine their location, how many acres they needed, what type of crops they were to grow, if they required a water source, and how far they would be willing to travel to farm rented land.

From this information the districts prepared a list of farmers needing land and sent it to all landowners with land to rent or lease. It was clearly stated that it was up to the landowner to contact a farmer directly. Advice was given to the landowners on the kinds of agreements and concerns that should be discussed before finalizing an agreement, such as permitted uses, services to be provided by each party, management of the land, rental renewal options, and liability for incidents related to farming activities. A range of rental rates in the area was also provided. The rates have ranged from no cash payment in a few cases up to \$100 per acre per year for high value specialty crops. Land parcels have ranged from 1 to 30 acres.

This is the first year the clearinghouses have been operating, and the response has been good in both counties. More than 75 farmers now rent land that otherwise would have been idle and nonproductive. As more people hear about the clearinghouses, the districts expect to

match more farmers and landowners each year.

One factor the districts stress with each landowner is the need to have a conservation plan to protect the land and guide the farmer in the appropriate use and treatment of the land.

In this Match Game, everybody wins—the farmer who has a more viable farm; the landowner who gets a return from the land; the consumer who gets locally grown and fresher food; the wildlife who have a better and more diversified habitat; and the State, which has more local food produced and a more viable agricultural industry.

C. Eugene Mills,  
deputy State conservationist, SCS, Amherst, Mass.

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## **Local Involvement to Save Farmland Is Needed**

Local involvement and leadership from the agricultural community are needed to preserve the State's essential farmland according to statements by Dean Pridgeon, director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture, and Gene "Tony" Perfect, planning director for the Leelanau County Planning Department, at the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts' meeting last August.

"It will take leadership on the part of agriculture, and the initiative must come from the local level," stated Pridgeon as he addressed representatives from the State's 83 soil conservation districts. He told the conservationists that no one tool or technique would work in all situations and that each community or county had to decide what best fit their needs.

Pridgeon told the group that if Michigan's agriculture is to remain strong, the State must keep its farmland for farming. He referred to Michigan's right to farm law as the best in the Nation when he pointed out that the right to farm law is an important step toward keeping a strong agricultural economy.

"Get involved locally," said Tony Perfect who has 20 years of land use



planning experience. He told the conservation group that they must identify what they want to do or have an objective.

Perfect pointed out that strong local zoning is needed to support and implement the local land use plans to address the needs of agriculture. He said, "Local people must care about what happens to their land and be willing to stand up and do what is necessary to keep good land for farming."

"Conservation districts are taking the position that they must, in addition to saving the soil for farming, save the land for agriculture," stated Warren Suchovsky, president of the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts.

**Roger Howell,**  
public affairs specialist, SCS,  
East Lansing, Mich.

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## Run For Cover

Californians of all ages ran in the fourth annual "Run for Cover," a 6.2-mile footrace sponsored last August by the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District (RCD). The 57 runners were grouped into seven divisions according to age, and each age group was divided into male and female. They ranged from under 13 years old to over 60. Two sisters under 13 placed first and second in their division and a husband and wife over 60 each placed first in their divisions. Overall winners for men and women came from the 18- to 29-year-olds.

The Santa Cruz RCD sponsors the annual footrace for the fun of it, and more. "Not only does it raise money for the RCD's activities," says Rich Casale, Soil Conservation Service district conservationist in Santa Cruz County, "but the race also gives us a new target audience for our conservation message."

Before the runners took off at 9 a.m., an RCD representative talked about the theme of the race and what the district and SCS do. The theme, "For Land's Sake, Run for Cover," was printed on runners' official T-shirts. Planting vegetative cover is an important conservation

practice in the county where soil erosion and landsliding on unstable slopes are major problems, especially during the rainy winters. In keeping with the theme, many of the prizes were plants.

Runners could preregister for the race at the district office for \$6 or register on the day of the race for \$8. Each runner received a free T-shirt. Non-runners could buy the shirts for \$5.

The two overall winners of the footrace each received a gold medal, a \$20 gift certificate donated by local sporting goods stores, and a choice of a plant or a T-shirt. The top finishers in the other divisions each received a gold medal, and all runners received the rest of the prizes which included \$10 gift certificates, donated by sporting goods stores, and plants.

Casale was the main organizer of the run which grossed about \$450 for the district. He also laid out the race course and designed the "Run for Cover" T-shirts which were blue and green on white with two small evergreen trees to the upper right of the message.

An SCS volunteer in Santa Cruz County, Kate Lyster, says that employees of the County Parks and Recreation Department helped make the signs that marked

the mostly asphalt course and helped to set up water stations and keep the runners' times. Lyster says many other people including three district directors, one associate district director, and three district employees helped with registering runners, keeping their times, and serving refreshments after the race to the runners and about 75 spectators. Each volunteer received a certificate of appreciation.

Casale says the "Run for Cover" was competing with four other area races and still had a good turnout. He attributes this to the wide advertisement of the run on television and radio and in the newspapers. Casale says a local runners' magazine also ran a story on the race.

Asked if the race was judged a success, Casale replied, "Oh yes, we've already begun planning for next year's 'Run for Cover.'"

**Nancy M. Garlitz,**  
associate editor, *Soil and Water Conservation News*, SCS, Washington, D.C.



And they're off! These runners are participating in the fourth annual "Run for Cover" sponsored by the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District in California.

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## Name That Lake

Sixth grade students at two elementary schools in Fairfax County, Va., competed in an essay contest to name the lake at Pohick Creek watershed.

To help the students write their essays, the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District provided background information, a suggested lesson plan for teachers, hand-out pamphlets for each pupil, slide sets, tapes and films, and a list of appropriate books in the Fairfax County public libraries.

Conservation district staff and Soil Conservation Service personnel gave slide talk presentations and conducted field trips to the lake to explain the purpose and operation of the Public Law 566 small watershed project.

Students submitted nearly 300 essays suggesting a name for the lake and reasons for their selection, and a committee of members of nearby homeowner associations selected the winner.

Trici Higginbotham of Laurel Ridge Elementary School won the contest and a \$50 savings bond with her suggestion, "Woodglen Lake." She also received a letter of commendation and a certificate of recognition at the dedication ceremony at the lake site. Prizes were provided by the soil and water conservation district.

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## Color Coded Soil Survey

In New Hampshire, Rockingham County Conservation District Secretary Mary Currier is credited with assembling special color-coded soil survey reports for five Rockingham County towns. The conservation district requested the interim reports from the Soil Conservation Service to assist town officials in their community planning efforts. According to SCS District Conservationist Jim Hayden, the color coding makes it easier to explain to people how to use the reports.

Currier chose white for pages giving background information, which included the title page; table of contents; foreword; introduction; sections on how to use the report, how the survey was made, legend of map symbols; and the appendix. She selected gold for the section on use and explanation of soil survey interpretation sheets. Green was the color for the section on important farmlands, and the soil interpretation sheets were printed on blue.

A blueline copy of the soil map was included at the back of each report.

The address for the Rockingham County Conservation District is P.O. Box 190, Exeter, N.H. 03833.

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## USDA Agencies in Hawaii on Display

Eight USDA agencies used a theme of "USDA and Small Farmers—Partners in Hawaii" to pull together an exhibit for Federal Week in Hawaii. The designer used categories of assistance given through USDA to avoid a "one panel per agency" layout. The 10-foot-long exhibit cost each agency about \$50, including rental of the panels. Participating were the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Farmers Home Administration, Food and Nutrition Service, Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, Statistical Reporting Service, and University of Hawaii—Cooperative Extension Service. It was displayed for a week with about 18 other entries in a shopping mall.

**Phyllis Charles,**  
public affairs specialist,  
SCS, Honolulu, Hawaii

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## Three Centuries of Soil Loss

The Lancaster County Conservation District in Pennsylvania has designed an exhibit entitled, "Soil: Our Foundation." Two cylinders of topsoil show the decrease in the average depth of topsoil in the county over the three centuries that the land has been cultivated. Leaflets and cooperator agreement forms can be displayed around the base.

The exhibit has been used at a celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. When not used elsewhere in the county, the exhibit occupies a space in the county Farm and Home Center where it has attracted much attention.

The exhibit resulted from a workshop on exhibit design at a conservation district council meeting.

Adapted from an article in the May, June, July 1982 issue of *Teamwork*, published by the State Conservation Commission, Harrisburg, Pa.

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SCS District Conservationist Bill Adams explains the uses of the Public Law 566 lake to students from a nearby school.



## Conservation Planning Month Proclaimed in Tennessee

October 1982 was Conservation Planning Month in Tennessee. On September 17, 1982, Governor Lamar Alexander signed a proclamation, which read:

"Whereas, the welfare of the present and future generations depends on the conservation and wise use of the State of Tennessee's 26.5 million acres of land resources of which 13.4 million acres are utilized for farmland to produce food and fiber by the State's 95,000 farmers; and

"Whereas, agriculture is the number one industry in Tennessee, producing cash receipts from farm products in 1981 that exceeded 1.8 billion dollars, and providing jobs for 347,000 Tennesseans; and

"Whereas, erosion and the resulting sediment is both a major economic and environment problem throughout the State but especially so in the 21 West Tennessee counties where 59 percent of all erosion occurs; and

"Whereas, assistance is available to farmers from Tennessee's 95 soil conservation districts, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, the University of Tennessee Extension Service, Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, and Tennessee Valley Authority to plan and carry out soil and water conservation programs;

"Now, therefore, I, Lamar Alexander, as Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim the month of October 1982, as Conservation Planning Month in Tennessee and request that all Tennesseans support and assist in every possible way soil conservation district supervisors and other conservation leaders in protecting our precious soil and water resources."

## Expanding Soil and Water Conservation News Coverage

Many Soil Conservation Service field offices in Iowa were doing an excellent job of sending news releases and information on soil conservation to the media located within their county. But they were missing out on a significant amount of publicity by failing to send the releases to newspapers and broadcasters who cover their county but were not located within the county. Part of the reason for this was that they didn't know what kind of news would be used or by which media.

In a special effort to get more coverage in the Loess Soils Target Area, the SCS public affairs staff asked selected major radio stations serving western Iowa to tell on tape what offices they wanted news from and what kind of news they wanted. The stations were first contacted by telephone. A letter from the SCS State conservationist followed, with a list of questions (see questions at right) and a return mailing label. A blank cassette or reel-to-reel tape was also sent with the letter if the station requested one.

The responses were transferred to a single tape and a duplicate cassette was made for each field office. Each station was asked to answer all the questions within about 3 to 5 minutes, so all the stations could be included on a cassette that had about 20 minutes of speaking on each side. A handout was also provided to each field office that listed radio, television, and newspaper people, addresses and phone numbers, and what news was desired by each.

The public affairs staff found that:

- This project took little SCS time and money to prepare;
- The station people were more than happy to do it;
- The field office staffs were convinced enough by the tapes that they greatly expanded their news release lists, resulting in much more coverage of soil and water conservation news at the expense of only a few extra copies of news releases and envelopes; and

- The project improved relations between SCS and the stations.

## Questions Sent to Western Iowa Radio Stations

1. Please give your name, the name of your station, and your position there. What is your station's phone number for news? Who should be contacted at your station in regard to news? Editorials?
2. Which counties in Iowa would you like news of local soil conservation activities from?
3. How would you like to receive soil conservation news? Typed, double-spaced news releases? Phoned-in actualities? (How long?) Phoned-in news tips?
4. Would you announce upcoming farmer education meetings that don't cost anything to attend? How far in advance would you like to be notified of these meetings? If a big meeting was coming up, would you consider running meeting announcements as a public service?
5. Here are 10 examples of news that Soil Conservation Service offices in your broadcast area might send you. Which ones would you consider using?
  - (1) News of local meetings, tours, and field demonstrations that show farmers how to save soil, fuel, and money with conservation tillage.
  - (2) The extent of severe soil erosion caused by recent heavy rains or strong winds.
  - (3) Winners of a local soil conservation essay contest for junior and senior high school students.
  - (4) Annual progress made in a multi-year project to map every acre of soil in a county. The project will result in a published soil survey with copies available for anyone interested.
  - (5) Appointment of a new person to an SCS office.
  - (6) Financial assistance available to help farmers pay for soil conservation projects.
  - (7) A story about a farmer who grows corn and soybeans without using any tillage.
  - (8) A story about a farmer increasing his income and cattle gain with a program of pasture renovation and management.
  - (9) Accomplishments made to reduce soil erosion during the past year and remaining soil conservation needs.
  - (10) Farmer and teacher winners of an annual soil conservation awards program.

**Dean Miller**, was public affairs specialist, SCS, Des Moines, Iowa, now public affairs specialist, SCS, St. Paul, Minn.

## Plant Series Big Hit With Newspaper Readers

A cup of coffee with a friendly editor turned Soil Conservation Service District Conservationist John Williams into a volunteer plant historian for the local newspaper in Stephens County, Tex.

Williams has written for the newspaper, the *Breckenridge American*, since he began working for SCS in Stephens County 30 years ago. He intrigued the editor with tales of native plants being used by early settlers and native Americans as food, medicine, soap, dyes, furniture, and fence posts. With a handshake and the promise of a loaned camera, the two began a picture story of plants that entertained readers from May 1977 to July 1978. James Alderson, now an SCS area range conservationist, helped with the series when he served as a range conservationist on Williams' staff.

The editor asked Williams to begin the series with the mesquite tree, which is both the symbol and the scourge of native grazing lands in West Texas. Williams told readers stories he had heard from oldtimers about using mesquite beans for flour, intoxicating drinks, a black dye, and as an ingredient in a cement to fix broken pottery. In following issues, his photograph captions told of plants used for food and cover by deer, turkey, quail, and dove—game which can increase West Texas ranchers' income, through hunting leases, more than many cash crops. Plants palatable and nutritious to livestock were also featured.

Readers liked the series so much the editor, now publisher, asked Williams to do it again. Williams advises other district conservationists who try the idea to keep a set of photos or negatives and more than one set of newspaper clippings on file, in case they are asked to repeat the series. He also encourages them to send the clippings to their State's SCS public affairs specialist.

**Donald L. Comis,**  
assistant editor, *Soil and Water Conservation News*, SCS, Washington, D.C.

## Grant Funds Project to Train Conservation District Directors

The University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service and the Illinois Department of Agriculture jointly announced the funding of a \$90,000 project to teach organizational management skills to Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) board members.

The 2-year project, designed to teach the teachers, will be developed in response to expressed concerns from board members about their ability to handle management responsibilities. Under the State's Water Quality Management Plan, SWCD board members are responsible for protecting surface-water quality and reducing soil erosion, explains Jerry Robinson, Extension specialist in rural sociology. Robinson and Jon van Es, also an Extension rural sociologist, are co-directors of the project.

The project staff will develop learning modules to be used by county Cooperative Extension advisers, Division of Natural Resources staff, Soil Conservation Service professionals, community college faculty, and other agency personnel. These materials will then be used in training small groups or individual soil and water conservation directors and board members.

Topics to be covered include the roles and responsibilities of district directors, how to define soil and water conservation as a community problem, how to develop community-wide support for soil and water conservation, and how to manage conflict. The curriculum also will cover how the Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District board can function more effectively as a management team to get the job done and how conflict can be managed so it is a positive force in the process of saving the Nation's natural resources.

An eight-person advisory board will be appointed—including two county soil and water conservation district directors and representatives from the Soil Conservation Service, the Division of Natural Resources, and the Extension Service—to

assist the project directors in their development and implementation of the curriculum.

Actual instruction for the trainers will begin during spring 1983 and instruction of board members will take place from July 1983 to July 1984.

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## Conservation District Brochure Tells Where to Find Help With Resource Planning

Ramona-Julian Resource Conservation District directors in California have published a brochure, entitled "Who Do You Call for Help!," to enable local citizens, resource planners, and local decision-makers locate technical help from various Federal, State, and local agencies. The brochure lists the local offices, telephone numbers, and services of USDA's Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Forest Service, and Extension Service; California Departments of Forestry and Fish and Game; and San Diego County Departments of Agriculture, Sanitation and Flood Control, Parks and Recreation, and Fire Services.

In the brochure, services are divided into agriculture, farm loans, fire protection, fish and game, forestry, soil conservation, parks and recreation, flood control, and construction. Under construction, for example, are listed the Department of Public Works—San Diego County, building permits, grading permits, rights-of-way, and tree planting-trimming-removal. The brochure covers the communities of Ramona, Julian, and Borrego Springs of eastern San Diego County.

The Ramona-Julian district directors say that there is a wealth of resource information and technical assistance available from the USDA, State, and local agencies; people just need to know where to find it.

**Jason Jackson,**  
soil conservationist, SCS, Ramona, Calif.

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## A Pile of Soil You Can Relate To

Soil conservation districts (SCD) in Tennessee have found a method to show the amount of topsoil lost to erosion in their State. Dewey Simpson, Soil Conservation Service district conservationist in Maryville, said the Blount County SCD in east Tennessee first tried it last March.

"We made arrangements with the owner of a local shopping center to use two parking spaces at the busiest corner of the parking lot," said Simpson. "Then we asked a local contractor to donate 14 tons of topsoil, transport it to the site, and dump it."

"We placed a sign at the site and handed out information leaflets explaining the pile of topsoil," Simpson continued. "We also made sure we had media coverage when the soil was dumped."

The sign used by the Blount County SCD read, "This 14-ton pile represents the average annual loss of topsoil per cropland acre in Tennessee due to soil erosion. At this rate, 1 inch of soil is lost each 11 years. Blount Soil Conservation District."

The conservation district left the soil on display for 2 weeks. The district then placed an article in the local paper inviting the public to fill their flower pots with the free soil. By noon the following day, all the soil was gone.

"We feel that this project was extremely successful in getting people talking about the erosion problem and what ought to be done about it," Simpson said. "One fellow said that we should treat areas of severe erosion as though they were natural disaster areas and put enough resources in to repair them."

The soil conservation district in nearby Jefferson County also used the topsoil display at a busy shopping center, according to SCS District Conservationist Mike Hubbs. Two Knoxville television stations covered the event on the evening news.

A third Tennessee conservation district used the same idea but found a different site. The McNairy County SCD dumped topsoil at the main entrance to the county fair.

"We wanted an exhibit we didn't have to stay with; something that wouldn't take a lot of staff time," explained Jim

Needham, SCS district conservationist in Selmer. "We figure we reached about 3,000 people during the week of the fair because that was the fair attendance and everyone had to pass through the main gate."

Because of the higher average erosion rate in this west Tennessee county, the McNairy SCD used 16 tons as the amount of soil lost per cropland acre annually in the county. After the fair, the topsoil was spread on eroding areas on the fairgrounds and seeded.

The idea for the topsoil display was publicized by the SCS South National Technical Center (NTC) in Fort Worth, Tex., and has since been used by conservation districts in Montana, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Missouri. For more information, contact the SCS South NTC, P.O. Box 6567, Fort Worth, Tex. 76115.

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## Conference To Be Held on Cost-Effective Conservation Systems

A four-State conference aimed at promoting cost-effective soil conservation management systems is scheduled for January 12, 1983, at Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, Mo.

The conference, "Men-Women-The Land: Mid-America's Future," will cover such current topics as conservation tillage systems, the effects of soil erosion on yields, economics of land treatment, and forage systems.

The four-State corner region of Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri has been designated by the Soil Conservation Service as a "targeted" area because of extreme upland cropland erosion rates, which average 21 tons of soil loss per acre per year.

For more information on the conference, write to the Mid-America Association of Conservation Districts, 301 West Lexington, Room 225, Independence, Mo. 64050, or telephone (816) 461-0880.

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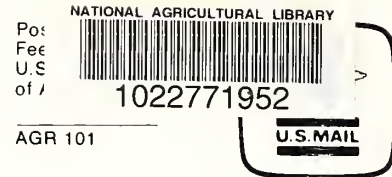
This photo, which appeared in a Maryville, Tenn., newspaper, helped the Blount County Soil Conservation District publicize the soil erosion exhibit at a local shopping center.

Moving?

Send present mailing label and  
new address including zip code to:

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Soil Conservation Service  
P.O. Box 2890, Room 0054-S  
Washington, D.C. 20013

Official Business  
Penalty for private use, \$300



THIRD CLASS MAIL  
BULK RATE

Meetings	January	9-13	American Farm Bureau Federation, Dallas, Tex.
		9-13	Catfish Farmers of America, Washington, D.C.
		14-17	North American Gamebird Association, San Diego, Calif.
	February	6-9	Land Improvement Contractors of America, San Diego, Calif.
		6-10	National Association of Conservation Districts, New Orleans, La.
		14-18	Society for Range Management, Albuquerque, N. Mex.
		28-March 2	Southern Forest Institute, New Orleans, La.
	March	13-18	American Society of Photogrammetry and the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping, Washington, D.C.
		18-20	National Wildlife Federation, Albuquerque, N. Mex.
		18-23	North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, Kansas City, Mo.
	April	10-12	American Pulpwood Association, Atlanta, Ga.
		11-14	Garden Club of America, Houston, Tex.
		16-20	American Planning Association, Seattle, Wash.
		24-27	Association of American Geographers, Denver, Colo.
	May	15-19	National Council of State Garden Clubs, Louisville, Ky.
		18-20	Southern Forestry Conference, Myrtle Beach, S.C.
		26-31	American Association for the Advancement of Science, Detroit, Mich.
		28-June 4	General Federation of Women's Clubs, Orlando, Fla.
		30-June 3	American Geophysical Union, Baltimore, Md.
	June	5-9	American Water Works Association, Las Vegas, Nev.
		12-16	Outdoor Writers Association of America, Wichita, Kans.
		19-23	Forest Products Research Society, Norfolk, Va.
		19-24	Air Pollution Control Association, Atlanta, Ga.
		26-29	American Society of Agricultural Engineers, Bozeman, Mont.
		26-30	American Seed Trade Association, San Francisco, Calif.
		30-July 4	Sierra Club, Snowmass, Colo.